United Nations S/PV.5746

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5746th meeting

Thursday, 20 September 2007, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ripert	(France)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	Ghana	Mr. Appreku
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

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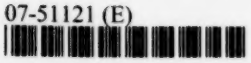
07-51121 (E)



The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Lynn Pascoe, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Pascoe: We are at a very important juncture in the search for peace in the Middle East. A new push for peace is being made and holds genuine promise. However, the situation on the ground remains one of deep concern.

Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas continue their bilateral dialogue. They recently agreed to set up negotiating teams to assist them in transforming their discussions into an agreed text. A lot of work remains to be done if these talks are to produce a substantive agreement. United States Secretary of State Rice is currently in the region to take stock of progress and encourage further effort. She will brief the Quartet when it meets here in New York on Sunday.

Quartet representative Blair recently completed his second visit to the region to develop his agenda on economic revival and institutional reform. He will also brief the Quartet on Sunday. The United Nations continues to give Mr. Blair's efforts its full support.

As these diplomatic efforts have proceeded, violence among Palestinians has killed 11 and injured 95, including 8 children. There have been several violent confrontations with heavy exchanges of fire, reflecting a deep and continuing political crisis.

In Gaza, Hamas has replaced senior personnel in ministries, while adopting increasingly repressive measures to solidify its control. I am particularly concerned at reports of mounting human rights abuses at the hands of paramilitary Hamas forces, including the violent dispersal of demonstrations and the illegal detention of other Palestinians.

In the West Bank, Palestinian Authority security forces have been arresting alleged Hamas members. The Palestinian Authority has closed over 100 charities and non-governmental organizations. In the absence of sessions of the Palestinian Legislative Council, President Abbas continues to rule by decree. A recent decree introduced major changes to the electoral law by adopting a full proportional system and requiring any party participating in future elections to be committed to the 1988 Declaration of Independence of the Palestine Liberation Organization as well as the Basic Law. Hamas has strongly attacked that decree.

The continued division of the occupied Palestinian territory is a matter of deep political, security and socioeconomic concern. Obviously, the longer it continues the harder it will be to overcome. President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad insist that Hamas apologize for its violent takeover of Gaza in June, reverse the steps it has taken, and recognize the Palestinian Authority. However, Hamas continues to reject those demands and to call for dialogue, while solidifying its de facto rule in Gaza.

Violence between Israelis and Palestinians has also continued. In the reporting period, 20 Palestinians were killed and 89 injured, while one Israeli was killed and 50 were injured. I condemn the continued indiscriminate rocket fire by Palestinian militants in Gaza against civilian population centres in southern Israel. Those attacks have caused casualties and damage, particularly in Sderot, at which 10 rockets were fired in the opening two days of the school year. A rocket fired by Islamic Jihad also struck an Israeli army base at Zikim on 11 September, injuring 44 soldiers, including one critically, while 23 others were treated for shock. Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit remains in captivity in Gaza and efforts to renew talks for his release appear to have made no headway.

Yesterday, the Israeli security cabinet declared Gaza an enemy entity and announced its intention to interrupt essential services, such as electricity and fuel, to the civilian population. Israel has also closed the

Strip for the movement of Palestinians in and out and indicated that it will severely restrict the movement of internationals. As noted yesterday, while we fully understand Israel's security concerns, the steps announced would, if implemented, violate Israel's obligations towards the civilian population under international humanitarian and human rights law. There are 1.4 million people in Gaza, including the old, the young and the sick. They should not be punished for the unacceptable actions of militants and extremists. We believe that Israel should rethink that decision.

Israel Defense Forces (IDF) actions have also caused civilian casualties. On 22 August, Palestinian twins aged 10 and a 12-year old from the same family were killed by an IDF missile targeting northern Gaza. No satisfactory public investigation or action has been taken in similar incidents to give confidence that the IDF is making a maximum effort to prevent such casualties.

In the West Bank, the IDF conducted 110 searches, detaining 175 Palestinians. The IDF claims that its security measures have prevented a number of planned suicide bombings and that earlier in the month it uncovered an explosives laboratory in Nablus. A raid into Nablus which began on 18 September and is continuing has left a 17-year old Palestinian and a disabled Palestinian man dead. An Israeli soldier has also been killed in the incursion.

Earlier steps to build confidence and improve conditions on the ground in the West Bank have not been built upon in the reporting period. For example, a welcome Israeli initiative to release a further number of Palestinian prisoners appears to have been slowed down. No action has been taken to ease obstacles to freedom of movement in the West Bank, which have risen to 563. This level of restriction is contrary to the Agreement on Movement and Access and to the goal of rejuvenating the Palestinian economy. Action on this matter is now critical.

Settlement construction is continuing on both sides of the barrier in the majority of settlements. No action has been taken against outposts. A new outpost is visible within 100 metres of an Israeli army post at the northern entrance to Ramallah. Continued settlement expansion is contrary to international law and the road map and discredits efforts to advance the peace process.

Construction of the barrier deep within the West Bank continues, contrary to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice. On 4 September, the Israeli High Court ordered a section of the barrier rerouted where it deviates from the 1967 armistice line to incorporate the settlement bloc of Modiin. The Israeli army was unable to make a security case for the planned route in front of a judge, and the route was altered as a result.

The Palestinian Authority under Prime Minister Fayyad is working to impose law and order, institute reform and good governance, and improve living conditions. On security, more needs to be done to build confidence among Israelis and Palestinians alike that the Palestinian Authority security services will operate with professionalism and determination to prevail over militias. That is a key test for the Authority and meeting it is vital to the success of the political process. For example, further action is required to disarm militants Israel has agreed to remove from wanted lists.

With the resumption of Israeli transfers of Palestinian tax revenue, public sector salaries are being paid in the West Bank and Gaza, though in the case of Gaza most public sector employees are not reporting to work due to the dispute over who they report to.

The Government has embarked on an integrated budgeting and planning approach that will result in a Palestinian development and reform plan for 2008-2010. The plan aims to improve resource allocation to national priorities, increase the predictability of funding for services, and provide the basis for strengthened public expenditure management.

The scale of the challenge to rejuvenate the Palestinian economy is underlined by the World Bank in a report prepared for the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, which documents a comprehensive drop in socioeconomic indicators throughout the occupied Palestinian territory. Per capita gross domestic product declined from $1,612 in 1999 to $1,129 in 2006. Chronic diseases have increased by 31 per cent since 2005. One in 10 Palestinian children under five years of age is now stunted as a result of malnutrition. Palestinian private sector capability and investment potential are declining. The economy is becoming increasingly reliant on short-term aid, mostly spent on recurring expenditure rather than development.

The report goes on to recommend a series of measures capable of reversing those trends if implemented in parallel: full implementation of the November 2005 Agreement on Access and Movement; more work to consolidate the rule of law in the occupied Palestinian territories; and aid delivered predictably and through the Palestinian Authority. The Bank also stresses that the Gaza Strip represents 40 per cent of the population of the occupied Palestinian territory and must be incorporated into any recovery plan.

In that context, the continued closure of Gaza is a source of deep concern. While humanitarian supplies are reaching the population, the Karni and Rafah crossings have been closed since the Hamas takeover in mid-June. That has caused severe personal and economic hardship. Some $200-million-worth of United Nations and World Bank infrastructure programmes in the Gaza strip have been halted. A third of students have begun their school year without textbooks. Almost all exports from the Gaza Strip have ceased, though recently arrangements have been made to facilitate a limited amount of exports through Kerem Shalom. The inflow of foodstuffs into the Gaza Strip is slowly declining — approximately 27 fewer truckloads per day in August as compared to July. The World Food Programme reports that current levels of food imports only cover about 60 per cent of food import needs.

The Acting Special Coordinator is developing, in close consultation with many interested parties, a proposal to increase access through the crossings, including re-opening Karni. I call on all concerned to work with the United Nations to find a secure and satisfactory way to re-open the crossings.

I now turn to the regional situation. During the reporting period, a number of Arab League member States, as well as the Arab League Secretary-General, have stressed that the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue must produce substantive results if it is to receive Arab support and be the basis for a successful international meeting. They have also called for the meeting to be comprehensive.

On 9 September 2007, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic wrote to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council, alleging a breach of the airspace of the Syrian Arab Republic by the Israeli air force on 6 September. The Israeli Government has not commented on those allegations, which have been the subject of extensive media speculation.

In Lebanon, Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem of the 14 March parliamentary group was assassinated yesterday. Seven other people were killed and many more were injured in the explosion. The Secretary-General strongly condemned that act of terrorism, which, like others before it, was aimed at undermining Lebanon's stability.

The Secretary-General also urged the Lebanese to exercise utmost calm and restraint and encouraged continued dialogue among them. I would also like to inform the Council that yesterday the Secretary-General received a letter from Prime Minister Siniora of Lebanon, requesting that the United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission extend assistance in the investigation of this heinous crime. The Secretary-General will convey that letter to the Security Council immediately.

In a positive development, on 2 September, after 15 weeks of fighting in and around the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) declared victory over Fatah al-Islam. The fighting, which started on 20 May, resulted in 166 Lebanese soldiers being killed. Approximately 222 militants were also killed and 202 were arrested. In recent days, the army has continued to arrest militants who had managed to escape and is also questioning those under arrest. I pay tribute to the LAF soldiers and stress the importance of the Lebanese Government exercising its full sovereignty and control over all Lebanese territory, and for securing a victory for all of Lebanon against a clear threat to its sovereignty and stability.

In order to address the immediate and longer-term requirements of both the Palestinian and Lebanese communities affected by the fighting, the Government of Lebanon has appealed for approximately $382 million, which includes a new emergency flash appeal issued by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for $55 million. The UNRWA appeal remains underfunded, with only $17 million in pledges to date. I urge Member States to assist the Government of Lebanon to meet the humanitarian and reconstruction challenges.

Political tensions remain high surrounding the upcoming presidential elections in Lebanon. It is paramount that the elections be held in accordance

with the time frame and procedures stipulated in the Lebanese constitution. That requires an open and genuine dialogue among the parties with a view to electing a President who enjoys the broadest support of the Lebanese people. The Secretary-General has been in contact with Lebanese leaders to encourage them to spare no effort in reaching an agreement on a President. The Special Coordinator for Lebanon is also continuing to work closely with all parties on the ground towards that end.

The situation in the area of operation of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) remains calm, with no serious incidents to report. In the monthly tripartite meetings, the parties agreed on the modalities for visibly marking an initial 6-kilometre section of the Blue Line. Cooperation between UNIFIL and the LAF is being further enhanced by the initiation of some coordinated patrolling activities, which it is hoped will increase in the weeks ahead. During the reporting period, the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces also visited UNIFIL, and a successful joint UNIFIL-LAF military exercise was held.

Israeli air violations of the Blue Line have continued. UNIFIL observed a total of 99 violations since the last briefing to the Council. Israel continues to claim that the violations are necessary to counter breaches of the resolution 1701 (2006) arms embargo, which it says continue to occur. The United Nations will continue to assert in the clearest terms with both parties that one violation cannot justify another.

As the Council is aware, the Quartet meets this Sunday, 23 September, followed by an *iftar* with a number of members of the League of Arab States. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC) meets the following day. The Secretary-General will host or co-host all of those events.

The Quartet will hear from Mr. Blair on his plans for the period ahead, take stock of progress in the bilateral talks and discuss the way ahead in preparation for the international meeting called by President Bush. The Secretary-General will also impress upon his colleagues his concern for the welfare of the Palestinian population in Gaza. The *iftar* is an opportunity for the Quartet to convey its determination to work closely with its Arab partners in an effort to realize the potential of the Arab Peace Initiative and to advance the cause of a comprehensive regional peace.

The AHLC meeting is the occasion for Prime Minister Fayyad to present his Government's plan for Palestinian economic revival and for donors to signal their support in advance of a donor pledging conference before the end of the year.

Those meetings will only be as useful as the agreements and steps of implementation they help bring about, and the changes on the ground they help to catalyse. Much is at stake in the coming months. The situation on the ground is volatile and there are many obstacles to progress. The united effort of the international community will be vital to ensure that the renewed diplomatic effort produces something meaningful and durable. There will be difficult and unpopular choices ahead. Calculated risks are required for peace. The risks of inaction or timidity are incomparably greater than the risks of action. Now is the time for leaders to put their long-suffering people first, to think of the next generation and to do what needs to be done.

The President: (*spoke in French*) I thank Mr. Pascoe for his briefing. In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 10.35 a.m.

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5747th meeting

Thursday, 20 September 2007, 2.10 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ripert	(France)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Kenes
	China	Mr. Li Kexin
	Congo	Mr. Biabaroh-Iboro
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Ruiz Rosas
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Slovakia	Mr. Mlynár
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Williams
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

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07-51194 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 2.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the members of the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Lebanon, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Salam (Lebanon) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Following consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council strongly condemns the terrorist attack in Beirut on 19 September 2007 which killed at least seven persons, including Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem. The Security Council expresses its deepest sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims and to the people and Government of Lebanon.

"The Security Council commends the determination and commitment of the Government of Lebanon to bring to justice the perpetrators, organizers and sponsors of this and other assassinations and underlines its determination to support the Government of Lebanon in its efforts to this end.

"The Security Council reiterates its condemnation of all targeted assassinations of Lebanese leaders, including since October 2004, and demands an immediate end of the use of intimidation and violence against the representatives of the Lebanese people and institutions. On the eve of the crucial period of the presidential election, it stresses that any attempt to destabilize Lebanon, including through political assassination or other terrorist acts, should not impede or subvert the constitutional process in Lebanon.

"The Security Council reiterates, in this context, its call for the holding of a free and fair presidential election in conformity with Lebanese constitutional norms and schedules and without any foreign interference, fully respecting the sovereignty of Lebanon.

"The Security Council emphasizes the importance of the unity of all the Lebanese people and of the pursuit of dialogue among all of the country's political parties. It reiterates its full support to all ongoing efforts in Lebanon to combat terrorism, solidify democratic institutions through national dialogue, and continue to extend the authority of the Lebanese Government throughout its territory."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2007/34.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 2.15 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.5748

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5748th meeting

Tuesday, 25 September 2007, 10.15 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ripert	(France)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Li Junhua
	Congo	Mr. Gayama
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Mantovani
	Panama	Mr. Suescum
	Peru	Mr. Chávez
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Ansari
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Slovakia	Mr. Mlynár
	South Africa	Ms. Qwabe
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic (S/2007/488)

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07-51566 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the subregion

Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic (S/2007/488)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of the Central African Republic and Chad, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Zoumara (Central African Republic) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Come Zoumara, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Allam-Mi (Chad) took a seat at the Council table.

The President (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Ahmad Allam-Mi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2007/563, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations. Members of the Council also have before them document S/2007/488, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic.

It is my understanding that the Security Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution (S/2007/563) before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Belgium, China, Congo, France, Ghana, Indonesia, Italy, Panama, Peru, Qatar, Russian Federation, Slovakia, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1778 (2007).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.5749

Security Council

Sixty-second year

Provisional

5749th meeting

Tuesday, 25 September 2007, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Sarkozy	(France)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verhofstadt
	China	Mr. Yan Jiechi
	Congo	Mr. Nguesso
	Ghana	Mr. Kufuor
	Indonesia	Mr. Yudhoyono
	Italy	Mr. Prodi
	Panama	Mr. Torrijos
	Peru	Mr. García Belaunde
	Qatar	Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Slovakia	Mr. Gašparovič
	South Africa	Mr. Mbeki
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Howells
	United States of America	Mr. Bush

Agenda

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 19 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/552)

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07-51572 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Peace and security in Africa

Letter dated 19 September 2007 from the Permanent Representative of France to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2007/552)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council has agreed to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union, to whom I extend a very warm welcome. I am pleased to see him here.

I am also pleased to welcome heads of State or Government, ministers and other representatives participating in this summit meeting of the Security Council, together with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, whom I welcome and whom I thank.

Following those of 1992, 2000 and 2005, this summit meeting is the fourth of its kind to be held since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945. This demonstrates the great importance the Security Council attaches to the African continent. Clearly, the priority that the United Nations accords to Africa is shared by France.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I now invite the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, to take the floor.

The Secretary-General (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this important discussion. Ensuring peace and security for the people of Africa is not only at the very core of the United Nations agenda; it is also a top priority for me personally. I wish to act with a strong sense of urgency. I want to emphasize the importance of results, action and delivery.

Many African countries are confronted with daunting peace and security challenges. But encouraging signs are emerging. Progress has been achieved on several fronts. The successful conduct of elections in Sierra Leone is the most recent manifestation of the positive trends. The Governments and peoples of Africa must be commended for their determined efforts to address the challenges. But African peacemakers alone cannot tackle the continent's conflicts.

(*spoke in English*)

That is why the United Nations is working to strengthen its partnerships with regional organizations, such as the African Union (AU). The goal is to enhance the capacities to address conflicts. Together we must respond in a more timely and complementary manner to the crises in Africa.

The hybrid operation for Darfur represents an unprecedented partnership between the United Nations and the African Union. It is an expression of our collective commitment to end the tragedy of Darfur. More broadly, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations is working with the AU to develop an African standby force to help maintain durable peace on the continent as a whole.

But we must invest more in prevention and mediation so that disagreements do not develop into violence. Efforts to prevent conflict require much fewer resources than do peacekeeping operations. Next month, I intend to propose to the General Assembly a significant strengthening of the Department of Political Affairs to make more effective use of my good offices. I count on the Council's support.

I also seek its continued assistance in our efforts to consolidate peace in fragile post-conflict countries in order to help prevent a relapse into violence. The Peacebuilding Commission has so far helped bring increased international attention to recovery efforts in Burundi and Sierra Leone. We anticipate more referrals, including of African countries, for the Commission's consideration.

Climate change brings additional challenges to Africa, including in peace and security. As underscored at the high-level meeting I convened yesterday, decisive international action to address global warming is crucial. It is particularly important for Africa, as the impact of climate change will fall disproportionately on some of its poorest countries.

Equally pressing is the need to make development work in Africa. Fighting extreme poverty is key to preventing conflict. That is why I recently launched the Millennium Development Goals Africa Steering Group, together with the African Union, the

World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Commission and other partners. The aim is to galvanize international action to reach the goals on the continent by 2015.

(*spoke in French*)

Along the continuum from conflict prevention to peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in Africa, I am committed to ensuring that the United Nations plays its role to the fullest extent possible.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

I invite the President of the Republic of Ghana, His Excellency Mr. John Agyekum Kufuor, who is also the current Chairperson of the African Union, to take the floor.

President Kufuor: I am greatly honoured to participate in today's meeting, not only because Ghana's tenure in the Security Council coincides with its chairmanship of the African Union, but also because we are anxious to see a speedy reversal of those negative trends that have made our continent host to more than two thirds of all United Nations peacekeeping operations, not to mention the numerous relief agencies that are contributing to the protection of millions of people displaced by conflict.

The impressive number of participants in today's debate on peace and security in Africa and previous ones relating to the subject reflects growing deep and abiding interest in the well-being of Africa. That is most reassuring and encouraging. In particular, we welcome Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's unwavering commitment and determined efforts to live up to his pledge at the beginning of his term that Africa generally and the crisis in Darfur in particular are at the top of his agenda.

While we acknowledge with appreciation the invaluable support that Africa continues to receive from the international community, it is Ghana's vision that a new order of peace, unity, democracy and prosperity will soon prevail throughout the continent, in place of its current image as a disaster zone always in need of support. As highlighted in the concept paper prepared by the French delegation (S/2007/552, annex), for which France must be commended, many positive developments are taking place in Africa. In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and even in the Sudan, that is evident.

No one can deny, however, that formidable challenges still remain in areas such as the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drugs and human trafficking. The restoration of peace and normalcy on the continent, especially in places of conflict like Somalia and the Eritrea-Ethiopia border, is urgent. Reconstruction and the consolidation of peace in nations emerging from conflict must also continue to attract significant support from the international community to prevent a relapse.

Emergent threats, such as terrorism, climate change and the illegal exploitation of natural resources, equally demand vigilance and decisive action. The good news is that the African Union and its member nations are resolved to take the initiative in tackling these problems and are in fact making progress. That is all the more reason for the international community to continue to complement Africa's endeavours.

I am proud of the contribution of the African Union Mission in the Sudan (AMIS). It has had a great impact in Darfur, of course with the support of the international community, in spite of the exceptionally difficult circumstances in which it has been operating, including inadequate logistical and financial assistance.

The sustained presence of AMIS in Darfur is proof enough of the African Union's determination to assume its primary responsibility for peace and stability on the continent. It is also largely the joint effort of the African Union and the Security Council, especially through the appointment of special envoys, Mr. Jan Eliasson and Mr. Salim Ahmed Salim, that there has been the re-launch of political dialogue between most of the Darfur rebels and the Government of National Unity of the Sudan.

In this regard, we should acknowledge other ongoing initiatives to bring normalcy to the Sudan. These include the following: first, the joint efforts of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the Libyan leader, Brother Muammar Al-Qadhafi, to bring the remaining factional leaders to participate in the dialogue, to achieve full-scale negotiations; secondly, the resolution on deploying forces to control the common borders of the Sudan, the Central African Republic and Chad, to protect refugees, internally displaced persons and humanitarian relief workers, which we welcome; and thirdly, various contributions made by regional

organizations, such as the European Union and the League of Arab States, several countries, notably China, the United Kingdom and the United States, and a host of non-governmental organizations, which are to be appreciated.

I am confident that the forthcoming peace talks in Tripoli have good prospects for success, and I therefore urge all factions to agree to participate.

In the light of those initiatives, let me urge all concerned to endeavour to resolve whatever outstanding issues there are in the path of the deployment of the hybrid forces to secure a ceasefire and unimpeded humanitarian access in the region.

I cannot conclude my statement without appealing fervently to the Council to show commitment to the protracted conflict in Somalia equal to that it is showing with respect to Darfur. In spite of the initiative of the African Union in mobilizing troops from among member nations to keep the peace in that highly volatile area and the ready offer of some States such as Ghana to contribute troops, promised support thus far from partners in the international community to equip and airlift the troops has been inadequate and slow in coming.

The Security Council must therefore step in with timeous assistance. It must also consider a contingency plan for the possible deployment of a United Nations force to replace the African Union Mission in Somalia by next February.

The President (*spoke in French*): President Kufuor, what you have said about Somalia is especially correct and welcome.

I now invite His Excellency Mr. Thabo Mbeki, President of the Republic of South Africa, to take the floor.

President Mbeki: First of all, Mr. President, thank you very much for taking the initiative to call this meeting of the Security Council to discuss what is indeed an important matter. I will be very brief, partly because I am expected in the General Assembly shortly. I want to go and respond to President Bush there.

To come at this matter quite practically, it is a very important matter for us as Africans, and indeed we count very much on the support of the Security Council to address this important issue. I must say that the African continent, as members are aware, is indeed very committed to addressing this matter itself. Members will have seen many examples in which the framework for the resolution of all sorts of matters has come out of African initiatives. The political settlement in Liberia came out of a process that was led by the Economic Community of West African States. The process that has culminated now in the Ouagadougou agreement in Côte d'Ivoire, the peace process in Burundi, the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in North and South Sudan were all matters that were handled by the continent itself. I am mentioning that just to emphasize the seriousness of the continent itself in dealing with the matter on our agenda today.

The letter that was sent out by the French representative raises two important questions, that I think are really what we really need to focus upon. It mentions promoting an effective partnership between the United Nations and Africa based on the African regional organizations, and it goes on to ask:

> "In order to go farther, how can enhanced African crisis management and resolution capacities be facilitated and how can the need for African peacekeeping training be met? How can the post-conflict recovery efforts that must be carried out by the African countries concerned be supported? How can the establishment of more operational crisis prevention mechanisms be encouraged in Africa?" (*S/2007/552, p. 3*)

I think, really, that these are the actual matters that the Security Council needs to address.

Because of the seriousness of our intent with regard to this matter — no doubt, President Konaré will speak about this — we have set up a somewhat comprehensive architecture for peace and security on the continent, which includes the Peace and Security Council, the early warning system, a panel of the wise, an African stand-by force, a post-conflict reconstruction and development framework — the totality of these.

What is missing is the capacity to do those things and the resources of all sorts to be able to do them. We would want to address that matter directly ourselves, as much as we can. I think it would be very good indeed if some way could be found by which the Security Council could engage the African Union, represented here by President Konaré, in some detail on this. Here

is this architecture by which the Africans are saying: We want to address these problems ourselves, of course within the context of the international responsibilities of the Security Council with regard to peace and stability. But we do want to; hence, the reference to regional organizations correctly raised by the French representative.

What is it that can be done to ensure that we increase this capacity in all of those areas? I think if we did that, the result that we would see would indeed be a much more peaceful and a much more stable African continent.

The President (*spoke in French*): It goes without saying that I fully share President Mbeki's point of view.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Susilo Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia.

President Yudhoyono: I am sure that this important debate on Africa and the challenges to international peace and security will have a positive impact on the continent. Peace and security can be durable only if the sources of conflict are eliminated. We must therefore respond to the economic, social and political challenges to peace. That can be carried out through interregional cooperation.

Interregional engagement between Asia and Africa dates back to the 1955 Asian-African Conference that laid the strategic foundations for robust relations between countries in the two continents. In the framework of South-South cooperation, since 1980 Indonesia has offered capacity-building assistance, generally in the form of training and workshops in various fields, to hundreds of participants from African countries. We have also contributed troops to United Nations peace missions to the continent. Indonesian personnel have joined peace operations of the United Nations in the Congo, Liberia, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and the Sudan.

Today, Indonesia is also prepared to contribute police personnel to the peace mission in Darfur. We firmly support all efforts to build peace in Darfur today. We urge all concerned faithfully to implement agreements that would end the long-raging civil war that has torn the nation apart. Above all, the Government of the Sudan must fulfil its commitment to engaging in peace talks and carrying out an effective ceasefire. All factors that brought about the conflict — political, economic and social — must be decisively addressed. Dialogue among the stakeholders in Darfur must be established and sustained as soon as possible. The province must be put back on the road to development. Like the other smaller economies of Africa, the Sudan needs to catch up with the new prosperity of its bigger economies. Much of Africa remains challenged by conflicts that relate to natural resources, poverty and environmental degradation.

Article 65 of the United Nations Charter is particularly relevant to Africa. It provides for the Economic and Social Council to contribute to the work of the Security Council. As the Charter framers argued, improving living standards and achieving prosperity are essential to world peace. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Indonesia will do all it can to contribute to peace, security and development in Africa.

As to the ongoing conflicts in Africa, we need to apply three principles of international relations. First, many conflicts in Africa are inter-State. In those cases, the principle of consent is essential; national jurisdiction must be recognized. Secondly, prevention is better than cure; it is cost-effective and saves lives. Thirdly, the Security Council bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, but under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter it is also called upon to work with regional organizations whenever appropriate and practical. The United Nations and regional organizations must therefore enhance their capacity for confidence-building, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Those are not new concepts, but their full potential can be realized through refinement and practice by both the United Nations system and all regional organizations.

In the face of conflict, resources must be deployed and measures must be taken to alter or stabilize a situation on the ground. Troops drawn from within the region are usually more effective in peacekeeping. The United Nations/African Union hybrid operation in Darfur, which brings together United Nations resources and those of the African Union, is a fine example. More African troops should be trained for peacekeeping so that an African stand-by force can become truly operational.

In Africa, conflicts that seemed intractable five years ago are now being resolved, giving us hope that others will also be resolved soon. But we must always adhere to the tenets of international relations and address the social and economic challenges of peace. I am sure that Africa, with the help of an international community that is committed to global peace, will solve its problems and contribute more to global peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Ivan Gašparovič, President of the Slovak Republic.

President Gašparovič (*spoke in Slovak; English text provided by the delegation*): I take this opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General here and to commend you, Sir, for initiating today's discussion.

The recent history of Africa is replete with immense human tragedies. Let us recall Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Darfur and northern Uganda, to name but a few. It is our duty to help African countries to build their own capacities to protect their populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.

Because of their complexity, African tragedies must be considered in the context of the interrelated issues of security, development and human rights, as stated in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. Slovakia therefore follows with concern economic and political situations in some parts of Africa that could lead to new conflicts if they should deteriorate further. In that context, we are very concerned about the situation in Zimbabwe.

It is difficult to summarize, in the course of a few minutes, everything that needs to be done to ensure that Africa joins those regions of the world that are currently enjoying times of stability and economic development. Let me point out just a few aspects that Slovakia considers to be paramount.

First, we need to place maximum emphasis on the prevention of conflicts. As implied at the Security Council's open debate in August, it is imperative that a move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention be made at all levels.

Secondly, equal efforts must be made in order to address the grievances of the past. Slovakia fully supports fighting impunity. In that regard, we support the role of the International Criminal Court in particular.

Thirdly, it is of key importance that subregional and regional organizations take a larger share of responsibility. In that context, it is necessary to continue to support the development of cooperation between the United Nations and such organizations.

Fourthly, given the specificities of Africa, it is necessary to seek innovative approaches. We therefore welcome and support the deployment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur, as well as the multidimensional presence of the United Nations and the European Union in Chad and the Central African Republic. Despite these positive steps, the international community should not ease up its efforts aimed at relieving the suffering of the people of Darfur, who continue to live in uncertainty and to be dependant on humanitarian support. We are deeply concerned at recurrent news reports about aerial bombardments in Darfur, which pose a threat to the current fragile peace process. We hope that both the rebels and the Sudanese Government will cease hostilities as soon as possible and provide the United Nations and the African Union with full support in the process of deploying the Hybrid Operation.

Fifthly, merely reacting to acute humanitarian crises will not suffice. It is equally important to systematically address the horizontal problems both in the medium and long term. In that connection, let me underline the issue of security sector reform. A non-functioning security sector is a source of conflict that also tends to increase the severity and duration of conflicts. Reform, or the development of a new security sector, is a precondition for the long-term stabilization of countries, as well as for the possible withdrawal of United Nations peacekeeping operations.

In that context, I would like to focus the Council's attention on a workshop on security sector reform that we are preparing together with the Republic of South Africa. The workshop will be held in Cape Town on 7 and 8 November 2007.

The Slovak Republic wants to contribute adequately to the efforts of the international community aimed at ensuring peace and security in Africa. In the framework of development aid, we currently have projects in place that are focused on the development of infrastructure, education, health care and small- and medium-sized businesses. We are

convinced that economic growth and improved social conditions are key factors in conflict prevention.

In that connection, I would also like to highlight the statement made by President Bush in the General Assembly today (see A/62/PV.4) suggesting buying crops produced locally in Africa in order to help local agriculture. It is equally crucial to build democratic institutions, ensure the rule of law and promote human rights and good governance. In that regard, it needs to be noted that no external support can replace the role and efforts of the countries concerned.

In conclusion, let me once again express my gratitude to you, Mr. President, for initiating today's discussion. I believe it will contribute to an even more active approach to the African continent by the Security Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. George W. Bush, President of the United States of America.

President Bush: Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting of the Security Council. I appreciate the opportunity to join you, and I appreciate your focus on the challenges to peace and security in Africa, particularly in Sudan and Darfur. The reason I say that is that my nation has labelled what is taking place in Darfur as genocide. When we find genocide, it is time to do something about it. Time is of the essence. So, Mr. President, you are focusing our attention on this crucial matter.

I want to thank the Secretary-General as well for his support of the people of Darfur. I appreciate his determination to make relieving their suffering a priority of the United Nations.

I also want to thank Chairperson Konaré for the leadership of the African Union. After all, it deployed 7,000 troops. But 7,000 troops are not enough if you believe what is taking place on the ground is genocide — and maybe some do not think it is genocide. But if you have been raped, you think your human rights have been violated. If you are mercilessly killed by roaming bands, you know it is genocide. The fundamental question is, are we, the free world, willing to do more? You made a strong effort, Chairperson Konaré, and we appreciate you. But you know better than I do that the area of Darfur is bigger than France — or Texas. And both are plenty big for 7,000 troops.

The fighting in Darfur between the rebels and the Government continues. Two hundred thousand people have lost their lives. Two hundred thousand innocents are no longer with us. More than 2 million people have been forced from their homes. They are fleeing the violence and they are going to refugee camps and they hide in neighbouring countries such as Chad and the Central African Republic. That is why I appreciate your leadership, Mr. President, to help these countries help these refugees. Resolution 1778 (2007), adopted today, addresses the plight of the refugees in Chad and the Central African Republic. In other words, it is a step in the right direction. It is a practical solution to a big problem. It is part of a grand solution, Mr. President. That is why your leadership is appreciated.

The resolution authorizes the deployment to these two nations of a robust European peacekeeping force and several hundred police and military advisers. This United Nations mission is going to help national and local governments exercise sovereignty over their territory. It is going to allow workers to deliver humanitarian aid. That makes us feel good. We are spending $2 billion so far on providing aid, and we want to make sure our aid gets to the people who need help. That is why the United States strongly supports the resolution and the mission.

We continue to support swift implementation of existing resolutions of the Council. We want the words of the Council to mean something. We want it to be said, when the Council speaks on behalf of suffering people: Those words will be followed by action. So we call on the Government in Khartoum to facilitate the deployment of a robust United Nations peacekeeping force to save lives. We call on all parties to cease arms sales to the combatants. We expect people gathered around this table to send a focused message: that innocent life matters. We expect President Al-Bashir to observe a ceasefire during next month's peace talks, and we want the rebels to do the same. The message has got to be: We are tired of people trying to escape the noose of pressure. We want the pressure to be uniform. Why? Because we believe in universal freedom and peace.

The conflict in Darfur has claimed too many lives, and there is too much suffering. The innocent victims of this conflict want only to return to their homes. They want to live in peace. And it is our duty to help them realize that dream.

The President (*spoke in French*): Thank you, President Bush, for your presence here and your very strong statement.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Romano Prodi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Italy.

Mr. Prodi (*spoke in Italian; English text furnished by the delegation*): President Sarkozy has raised very important questions on peace and security in Africa. I wish to clarify two points immediately.

First, we must be clear which Africa we are talking about. The Africa that I see is a continent that is transforming its potential into reality. Just look at its progress towards achieving regional integration, strong economic growth, democratic political reforms, an enhanced strategic role, the courage with which many of its leaders have spoken out against the death penalty, and the demographic growth that will soon bring Africa's population up to the levels of China or India. In short, Africa is now a protagonist and no longer just an object of international relations.

Secondly, rather than continue to discuss what we can do for Africa, let us try to reflect on what Africa at this moment is asking us to do. In my many meetings with African leaders, the message that I have heard is for a relationship between equals to address the challenges in Africa, as well as the global challenges.

I will now respond to some of the specific questions raised by the African leaders. I wish to focus on two particular challenges: Darfur and Somalia, two grave crises that have been unresolved for far too long, and that require greater and more timely efforts. I have seen some signals pointing in the right direction.

The launch of the Hybrid Operation in Darfur is an important new development that moves in the direction of recognizing Africa's responsibility in Africa — which we call ownership — and the offer of cooperation from the international community — which we call partnership. If we are successful — and I am convinced that we shall be — it will constitute a key formula for the future. Darfur is a test case for the international community's ability to identify appropriate responses. Italy is ready to do its part. I have already indicated to the Secretary-General Italy's commitment to the joint mission, in terms of both finances and logistical air support for troop transportation, in addition to training programmes for the personnel that will be deployed there.

Let us be clear: the hybrid mission responds primarily to security demands. Yet, there are other demands that are of crucial importance to solving the crisis: political, humanitarian, and those related to the country's economic development. This is why, in my recent meeting in Rome with President Al-Bashir, I asked him for a strong signal to assure the success of the political negotiations scheduled to take place in Tripoli in late October. Mr. Al-Bashir assured me of his commitment to a unilateral ceasefire upon the resumption of the negotiations. This is an important signal, but we must all work together to ensure that the Tripoli meeting arrives at lasting solutions. Italy is also continuing its efforts to organize a meeting of the Intergovernmental Authority of Development to refocus international attention on the stabilization of South Sudan.

Somalia is another dramatic case that demands a rapid response and a sense of urgency. It has taken on a pressing dimension for Italy because of our special relationship with this country, which is suffering a political, humanitarian and security crisis.

There are some hopeful signs. The national reconciliation process seems to have begun, and the international community is being called upon to consolidate it, with a view towards restoring democratic normalcy in the country through the reconstruction of Government institutions and of the country itself. Security Council resolution 1772 (2007) of last month moves in this direction.

I believe, however, that an additional, collective effort must be made for the emergence of a comprehensive strategy inspired by the principles of ownership and partnership. Italy is financially committed to supporting the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). But, as in the case of Darfur, in Somalia too we must be committed to closer cooperation between the United Nations and the African Union. The International Contact Group for Somalia, which met in Rome a few days ago, sent a strong appeal along these lines.

Mr. President, you have asked us for concrete responses to the challenges facing Africa. What I consider useful and realistic is to give high priority to what Africa is requesting: peace, security, support for

alleviating poverty and fostering growth — continent-wide cooperation.

To promote peace and security, Italy has decided to support African capacity also through a bilateral African Peace Facility, a fund that will allow us to support — and, I underline, at the request of Africa — the efforts of the African Union and the leading subregional organizations in favour of peace and security; rapid-action interventions aimed at consolidating their institutional and operational structures; conducting joint United Nations-African Union actions; strengthening the logistical capacities of actions decided upon by the African Union; and dedicating special attention to training human resources in preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and post-conflict rehabilitation. The Sudan and the Horn of Africa will have top priority. The fund will operate in close coordination with the fund that already exists at the European level, because it is clear that our contribution must necessarily form part of a European strategy.

Europe must take the lead on defending peace and security in Africa, as well as on facing other global challenges that know no borders.

Europe is still Africa's leading partner in trade, investment and development assistance. But this is no longer sufficient: we must strengthen and, in some cases, create institutional, cultural and political cooperation. In short, we have to move from a strategy for Africa to a partnership with Africa. In this perspective, the upcoming Africa-Europe summit can no longer be postponed. It should mark an important step towards a strategic partnership between equals, based on mutual commitments and responsibilities. I truly hope that this can be done before the end of the year. Italy is working to ensure that it will spark the development of a truly European policy.

To honour the millennium commitments that we undertook here in New York and that have such a great impact on Africa, I have already indicated my willingness to sit at a table next year and see where we are in the achievement of these goals. I am convinced that those who have more to give should make a special commitment. Here, the Group of Eight (G-8) can and must play an important role. I pledge here and now to make this a central theme of Italy's presidency of the G-8 in 2009.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar.

Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani (*spoke in Arabic*): Mr. President, I appreciate the active initiatives you have been undertaking since your election as President of the French Republic, as well as your interest in discussing the issue of challenges to peace and security in Africa, which is of interest to my country for many reasons.

Among these reasons is the fact that 10 Arab countries are located in Africa. Some of them, such as the Sudan and Somalia, are facing daunting challenges at the moment. Moreover, Islam is wide spread throughout Africa. Furthermore, the predecessor of the African Union, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), whose charter was formulated in Addis Ababa in 1964, was launched as an Arab-African initiative in Casablanca in 1961.

Fifty years ago, in 1957, Mr. Harold Macmillan, then Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, made a famous remark about contemporary history when he said, "The wind of change is blowing through this continent". The wind of change was indeed blowing through Africa when its countries began to gain their independence. But the wind of change could become a wind of destruction, when the continent's States experienced the labour pains and difficulties of independence, the challenges and ordeals of moving forward with development, and the many other problems that have afflicted the continent with conflicts and disputes.

If we do not want to be unfair or harsh towards Africa, we must seriously and frankly address the problems that have hindered its progress and development and have led to the current violence. The civil wars and armed conflicts that have erupted have sometimes attracted armies of mercenaries, which are a source of great concern. That situation has caused one of the world's richest continents to lag behind all others, which itself is one of the real human tragedies of our era.

Donor countries and the United Nations have not hesitated to provide assistance to Africa. If such assistance is to be effective, it must be given under two conditions: the present of enlightened governance and the existence of effective international will, guaranteed by collective United Nations action. We do not believe

that we are being high-handed when we say that, in order to effect real change, we must establish new mechanisms for providing assistance to Africa so that it will truly benefit Africa's peoples.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Martín Torrijos, President of the Republic of Panama.

President Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to congratulate you, President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, on the initiative to hold this Security Council meeting as a way to emphasize how urgent it is that we address the problems besieging Africa today.

Africa is a continent of contrasts, where mineral abundance, ecological wealth and cultural diversity share space with the most abject poverty. There, arbitrary lines are drawn without respect for physical or cultural borders. The gradual collapse of the colonial legacy defined the modern history of the continent, and there was an increase in discord. But we firmly believe in Africans' capacity to overcome the effects of colonization through their own collective efforts, in the same way as they have acted as regional intermediaries in their own conflicts.

The way in which the situation in Chad, the Central African Republic and the region as a whole has been addressed is an example of how the Organization is taking a regional approach to conflict settlement. Nevertheless, we express our concern at the continued deterioration of the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe and the armed conflict in Somalia, which is straying ever further from the path of peace.

We note with optimism the international community's many efforts to strengthen continental initiatives to solidify economic and political integration on the continent. These include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the efforts of regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community, which are pillars of the African Economic Community.

Those initiatives demonstrate the interest of African countries in healing the wounds left by colonization. But it will be essential that the States of the continent respect human rights and make progress on measurable social and economic indicators. It will also be necessary for the international community to refrain from promoting policies that pursue interests left over from the past and without considering what is truly important: the rights and the dignity of the peoples of Africa.

Africa's future depends essentially on Africans, but the international community must always be present so that it can help to build a continent of peace where justice and human rights prevail — a continent whose inhabitants can once again dream of a future of well-being and hope.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Guy Verhofstadt, Prime Minister of Belgium.

Mr. Verhofstadt (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to say that I am very happy that we adopted resolution 1778 (2007) this morning. I can also announce that Belgium will participate in the joint peacemaking mission in Chad and the Central African Republic. Why? Because I believe that Africa, more than any other continent, needs particular and concerted attention from us. One out of every five children born in Africa today dies from a simple curable illness, hunger or malnutrition. Out of the four children who survive, two must do so on a dollar a day, and the third will never learn to read and write. That is the reality. Moreover, the chances are great that he or she will also have to engage in child labour. That is why we must act together for Africa.

However, the effort that we must make to improve the plight of all these children has never been so enormous. In fact, we must provide €60 billion. With such a sum, we could resolve all the basic problems in Africa. We could guarantee to each African access to clean drinking water, sanitation, basic health care and education.

But we must recognize — and this is why it is very important that we are having this discussion here this afternoon — that the major obstacle to progress in Africa is war. So I am pleased that we have decided to send new peacekeeping forces to Darfur and the surrounding countries, as we did in, for example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC). And it is also thanks to MONUC that the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for the first time in its history, was able to hold democratic elections. However, the battle is never over. The international community must remain vigilant

regarding the resurgence of violence, which is currently raging in the Kivus.

(*spoke in English*)

But I want to use — or abuse; I do not know which is the better word to use — this meeting to talk about one of Africa's greatest outrages: the problem of child soldiers in Africa. Today, there are 300,000 child soldiers in Africa, each of whom has his or her own horror story. If members will allow me, I should like to tell them one of those stories: that of Christine from Uganda, one of the children whom I have adopted financially. Kony's rebel army forced her to kill her own uncle when she was 14 years old. After that, she was kidnapped, presented as a gift to an army commander and taken to the Sudan. They abused and raped her, and in the end she found a way to escape. In doing so, she shot one of her guards dead. The other guard shot her in the head, but she managed to get away. Finally, she was taken in by the army and treated in a hospital for her bullet wound. There, she was also found to be pregnant.

I can tell you that Christine's story is just one of the many thousands of tragic, shocking tales of child soldiers on the African continent today. I believe that each one of them is a stain on the soul of human civilization — an unacceptable stain that politicians cannot and must not ignore. And I have three measures in mind to deal with the problem. First and foremost, what is needed is an embargo on the export of weapons to all the countries with child soldiers by means of a new international treaty on the arms trade. That is the best way to do it and to deal with it. Secondly, the international community must reach an agreement on stopping development aid to countries that use child soldiers in their army.

The current naming and shaming system that exists inside our Organization is not enough. Offending countries must not only be named, or shamed, but must actually be punished. But above all, the offenders themselves must be put on trial. Take, for example, Kony, the so-called leader of the Lord's Resistance Army of Uganda. He alone has been responsible for the abuse of almost 70,000 child soldiers on the African continent. An international arrest warrant has been issued by the International Criminal Court in The Hague. We know where he is, but nobody arrests him, while his activities continue to this day and the terror continues. Now, from the Congo, he and his troops regularly invade the southern Sudan, where more children are again kidnapped. The time for talking is over. Certainly, on this question — child soldiers — a time for action is here. We know what Kony has done; we know what he is doing and we know where he is, and there is not any possible pretext for him not to be arrested.

I therefore ask individually, the members of the Security Council to do just that. We have the possibility; MONUC is in east Congo, and we know where Kony is. Let us arrest him and put him on trial and make an example of him, as a warning to all criminals that the exploitation of children in armed conflicts is not possible in this modern world.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Belgium for its participation in the mission — that is very important.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Denis Sassou-Nguesso, President of the Republic of the Congo.

President Sassou-Nguesso (*spoke in French*): First, I wish to thank you, President Sarkozy, for your timely and welcome initiative in bringing us together today to address an issue which can leave no African leader unmoved: peace and security in Africa. Here, there is a fundamental issue at stake, namely the interrelated nature of the issues of peace, security and economic and social development. While it is true that poverty is a fertile breeding ground for terrorism, it is also true that it exacerbates tensions and fuels conflicts. The effective implementation of the various commitments made by the international community in the field of development, will undeniably contribute to preventing and resolving the many conflicts in Africa.

Currently, there are hardly any new major conflicts in Africa. Rather, our continent is dealing with situations that are entrenched in the past. The efforts made by the African States and the African Union have led to relative stability and have revealed positive perspectives, although in certain regions the situation remains fragile. Now is the time for action — to seize every way out of the crisis that is available to us. Developments in the Côte d'Ivoire are to be encouraged. The international community should support the ongoing process in that country.

In Darfur, we must act without delay. We must devote all of our energies to a successful political

dialogue, to the effective deployment of the hybrid force, as well as to humanitarian assistance and the economic recovery of the Sudan. All the decisions already taken and to be taken during the upcoming weeks must be effectively implemented in the field, in order to prevent any backsliding, or any deterioration of the situation, the consequences of which would be felt beyond the Sudanese borders. For that reason, Congo welcomes the involvement of the European Union in securing the borders between the Sudan and its two neighbours — Chad and the Central African Republic — as was already the case in the context of the elections held in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

However, the progress achieved in organizing democratic elections in that brother country must be accompanied by firm measures geared to address pending problems: suppression of the hotbeds of violence in the east, reform of the defence and security sector and economic reforms. Therefore, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo must continue to work closely with the authorities in that country in order to build upon the gains achieved.

But there is also the tragedy in Somalia and an inclusive political dialogue designed to promote national reconciliation must be encouraged. The Congo expects the United Nations to provide the African Union Mission in Somalia with all necessary support and to play an active role in stabilizing that torn country. On all those issues, we welcome the partnership linking the African Union and the United Nations and welcome the involvement of regional organizations, including the European Union and the League of Arab States.

Finally, the Congo wishes to thank all the participants in the debate, which has provided a new opportunity for us to mobilize the international community for Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Lavrov (*spoke in Russian*): I wish to join in thanking you, Sir, for the initiative to holding today's meeting of the Security Council on Africa. Conflicts on the African continent bring untold suffering to the population, hinder the transition of African States to sustainable social and economic development and pose a serious threat to regional and international security.

Russia supports the joint work of the United Nations and the African Union aimed at preventing and settling conflicts on the African continent. Special focus should be given to addressing chronic political and socio-economic problems that are further aggravated by new threats and challenges.

We support a more active and responsible methodology for conflict resolution and advancing the goals of national reconciliation based on agreements between the conflicting parties. Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of illicit armed groups, strengthening of State governance, security sector reform, development of democracy and the fight against poverty, corruption and the illicit use of natural resources are the core elements of the peace process. The resolution of these issues is the focus of the decisions taken by the African Union and the United Nations, which should be consistently implemented. We support a more active and responsible role of African States in advancing these goals.

It is important that the countries that have emerged from conflict do not slide back into crisis. Meaningful assistance to such countries in this respect must be provided by the Peacebuilding Commission, which should complete its institutionalization as soon as possible and focus on fulfilling its mandate.

I agree with those who have spoken today who believe that another important step was made in the peacekeeping efforts on the African continent. The Security Council has decided to establish a multidimensional joint African Union and United Nations peacekeeping operation in Darfur. We believe it will contribute to restoration of peace and order in the long-suffering province of the Sudan and normalize the situation around the Sudan. The next step in this line is to deploy operations in Chad and the Central African Republic. We welcome the initiative of the European Union in this regard.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and as a member of the G-8, Russia is contributing to the resolution of African conflicts, based on political and diplomatic means. We actively participate in international assistance to Africa, including our support to enhance African peacekeeping capabilities. Russian personnel are involved in practically all United Nations peacekeeping operations on the continent, and we are

sending specialists in other areas as well. We will continue to provide multilateral support to help Africa resolve its problems, as we have close and friendly partnerships with African countries.

Mr. Yang Jiechi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Let me first congratulate France on assuming the presidency of the Security Council for September. I am delighted to see President Sarkozy personally preside over today's meeting.

A harmonious world of enduring peace and common prosperity would be beyond our reach without stability and development in Africa. The African people seek a stable and developing Africa, that serves the common interests of all countries. The United Nations, in particular the Security Council, is duty-bound to help Africa maintain and build peace and embark on the road toward durable prosperity and stability.

Peace in Africa faces both opportunities and challenges. It is necessary to make comprehensive efforts at the national, regional and global levels to achieve peace. Reconciliation, development and cooperation should be the three major pillars underpinning peace in Africa.

Reconciliation is the key to peace in Africa. All of the ethnic groups and factions in countries concerned should put the national interest above everything else and endeavour to advance an inclusive political process, protect human rights, restore the rule of law, work together to promote national development and enable all people to benefit from peace dividends. Disputes between States should be resolved through dialogue and consultation. That is the right way to address them. One cannot choose one's neighbour, but can certainly learn to live with one's neighbour. Differences are inevitable, but ways can always be found to iron them out.

Development is the basis for peace in Africa. Conflicts are invariably accompanied by poverty, forming a vicious cycle. In the last analysis, peace in Africa hinges on whether there is faster economic and social progress, whether the Millennium Development Goals can be met as scheduled and whether the benefit of development can reach all. The rich natural resources in Africa should be a source of peace, not war. Conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peacebuilding should all aim to promote development. We support the international community's efforts to help Africa in terms of capital, technology and governance. But there should be respect for African countries' national conditions and development models, and one should not impose one's own way on them.

Cooperation is the means to achieve peace in Africa. Only unity among African countries can lead to a bright future for the continent. The African Union has, since its founding, played an effective role in resolving the Darfur issue and the Somalia issue. This fully shows that the African people are capable of resolving their problems in their own way. The international community, for its part, has a pressing need and, more importantly, the moral obligation to help Africa. We support the United Nations and the Security Council in providing more assistance to regional organizations in institution-building, information sharing, personnel training and peacekeeping operations. When the Security Council decides to take mandatory measures, it should pay particular attention to the views of African countries.

The Beijing Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation was successfully held last November, during which it was decided to establish and develop a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership. A symbol of further growth of traditional China-Africa friendship, this partnership will boost China-Africa cooperation and contribute to world peace and development. China will, acting on the principles of equality and mutual trust, mutual respect, mutual benefit and common development, continue to strengthen its cooperation with Africa and work together with the international community to promote peace and development in Africa.

Mr. García Belaunde (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me first of all to express Peru's appreciation for the convening of this meeting to address the issue of peace and security in Africa, where the majority of the cases on the Security Council's agenda originate.

The interrelatedness between underdevelopment and violence is particularly flagrant in the armed conflicts in Africa, in countries of marked instability where low levels of development go hand in hand with weak State structures and, generally, with a fragile rule of law. This explains the lack of equity in income distribution, as well as the low level of political and social inclusion of ethnic groups within a State. In this context, it should come as no surprise then, that once

violence erupts, it often spreads to neighbouring States through the actions of illegal armed groups and through the wave of refugees and of internally displaced persons, turning what were initially internal conflicts into humanitarian emergencies, and then finally into threats to regional peace and security.

Facing challenges of such magnitude, the Security Council must maintain a strategic vision that sees peace and security in Africa as the result of a skilled management of four main variables: prevention, cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, the humanitarian issue and post-conflict management.

We know full well that conflict prevention is less costly than ending conflicts. Effective conflict prevention in Africa should be based on long-term programmes that are geared towards meeting the basic needs of the population, adopting inclusive policies and working to improve social and economic indicators. In this undertaking, the principal responsibility lies with the African Governments, whose efforts deserve the support of the international community and of the international financial institutions.

Regional cooperation is a second element. Peru recognizes the achievements that have been made in building a continental and subregional collective security system for Africa. This approach must be further developed as, pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter, regional arrangements are assigned the principal responsibility for resolving the regional conflicts affecting them. Early warning, mediation before conflict escalation, reconciliation, reconstruction and stabilization must all be the subject of cooperation between the United Nations and regional and subregional African organizations.

On the humanitarian question, the priority for peacekeeping operations must be the protection of civilian populations through the timely deployment of peacekeeping forces, in order to halt violence and prevent new humanitarian catastrophes. These efforts must include the fight against impunity, and further mechanisms must be established in order to punish acts of genocide.

Finally, there is a need to adequately tackle the post-conflict situation in order to reinforce peace through the forging of inclusive economic, political and social processes. This undertaking entails neutralizing remaining hot beds of violence and empowering countries to address global phenomena such as climate change or pandemics. To that end, the international community must support reconstruction, the building of democratic institutions, the promotion of development and political and social reconciliation.

The Peacebuilding Commission, created for this very purpose, must meet the challenge of serving as an effective complement in order to support and sustain the collective security system.

Achieving peace and development on the African continent is necessary for international stability. With the support of the international community, Africa's leaders and peoples must fulfil the promise of a future of freedom, a future free from the hunger and terror that marked the period of colonization.

The President (*spoke in French*): I invite His Excellency Mr. Kim Howells, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom, to take the floor.

Mr. Howells: Mr. President, the United Kingdom congratulates you on bringing this debate to the Security Council, because Africa is central to the work of the United Nations. There is much good news. Six conflicts have ended in the past 10 years and, as the Secretary-General observed, recent elections in Sierra Leone are a shining example of a nation rejecting violence and seizing democracy, moving from war crimes and collapse to a peaceful transition of power through elections in only seven years. It is a remarkable story. And Africa is taking responsibility for solving its problems, through developing the African Union's political and peacekeeping capacity and through cooperation with the United Nations.

Nowhere will this cooperation be tested more than in Darfur. As President Bush has told us, the world's greatest humanitarian disaster is happening there.

The Secretary-General has identified three tracks to solving the crisis. First, there is the peacekeeping track, and I hope that the United Nations and the African Union will agree on the composition of the Hybrid Operation so deployment can get back on schedule. The Sudan must do all it can to speed up the process. Secondly, there is the political track. The upcoming talks must be inclusive, and they have to yield rapid results. We need a ceasefire at the outset

and a means to monitor and enforce it. Thirdly, there is the humanitarian track. Sudan must lift the obstacles to access — and they still are not lifted.

Let us not forget the need for justice. As the Secretary-General said this morning in his speech to the General Assembly (see A/61/PV.4), the age of impunity is dead. There can be no impunity in Darfur. Sudan should fully cooperate with the International Criminal Court. Our Belgian colleague gave us a vivid and tragic example of what happens when these war criminals believe that no one will make them answer for their despicable crimes. We have to make them answer.

If progress is made in Darfur, the United Kingdom stands ready to support reconstruction and development. But any party that impedes progress must face a robust response from the international community. Darfur complicates progress on the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in the Sudan, where progress remains essential.

The crisis in Darfur, as we know, has also spilled over the border into Chad, and resolution 1778 (2007), adopted today, paves the way for a European Union force to protect civilians there. Progress is needed also, as we all know, in Somalia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The United Nations should be actively engaged to find a way forward in Zimbabwe and to relieve the suffering of the people there. Three million refugees have already fled — three million — threatening instability across Zimbabwe's borders. We welcome the efforts of President Mbeke and others to find a political solution, and I hope the Secretary-General will dispatch a humanitarian mission.

The United Nations has a unique role in Africa, from ending conflict to delivering the Millennium Development Goals, where we must all redouble our efforts. The United Nations has done much for Africa. But as the people of Darfur, Somalia and Zimbabwe would tell us, there is also much more it urgently needs to do.

The President (*spoke in French*): With the Council's permission, I should like to make a few brief comments as President of the French Republic.

My first comment is that what is happening in Africa concerns us all. We cannot allow poverty to progress in Africa. We cannot let war tear Africa apart. We cannot let illness decimate Africans. This is a problem for the stability of the world.

I say to the Chairperson of the African Union that there is no contradiction between mobilizing the international community to assist Africa and our desire for Africans to take their destiny into their own hands. We wish to assist Africa in taking its destiny into its own hands. There are crises that are so serious, so substantial, that Africa cannot extricate itself from them by itself. Therefore, I believe in a strengthened partnership between the United Nations and the African Union.

And in a certain way, what is happening in Darfur is extraordinary. We see there the African Union, the United Nations and Europe, working for peace. And who here can say that either of those organizations would have succeeded alone? We are able to make progress because we are all together, helping Africa, which will believe once again in its future.

I would like to make a second comment. What Africa needs are concrete actions, not so many speeches, but rather concrete actions. Somalia needs military assistance, including upstream assistance, to stop piracy and to allow humanitarian assistance to get through. In Darfur, it is because a hybrid force is going to be deployed and because a European force will be deployed in Chad and that a number of countries, including France and others — the Prime Minister of Belgium spoke on this subject — that we agree to send people and wherewithal, that things can progress. For us, it is not just intellectual solidarity. What we are talking about operational solidarity.

The third and final comment that I would like to make concerns respect for the human person. We must be completely categorical about respect for human rights, on the progression of the rule of law, on the need for justice and on punishing criminals. It is not a matter of giving lessons to anybody. It is simply a matter of knowing that, in Africa, as elsewhere, murderers will one day be caught and punished.

Our national public opinions will only support the huge effort to help Africa — which is never sufficient, but substantial nonetheless — if we can ensure that criminals will not go unpunished, that we will not simply turn the page and go on to the next chapter. Criminals must be punished everywhere, and that is perhaps the major responsibility of the international community. Our collective responsibility is to tell those

who kill in Africa, in Lebanon or anywhere in the world that we will come after them wherever they are and hold them accountable in the only legitimate court, the court of the entire international community, which will uphold respect for human beings.

We want a coherent effort, working with Africans for peace, development and stability in Africa. To do this, we should accept no complacency when the rule of law is not respected or human beings are not respected. It is because we defend these ideas that we all wish to assist Africa together.

To end this meeting, I give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairman of the African Union Commission.

Mr. Konaré (*spoke in French*): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for inviting us, the African Union. Thank you for this important acknowledgment, which confirms the similar acknowledgment made by numerous countries who have accredited their ambassadors in Addis Ababa to our organization; by the United States of America, which today has hired a special messenger to the African Union in Addis Ababa and has given diplomatic status to our Ambassador in Washington, D.C.; and the European Union, which is preparing to appoint a special representative for Addis Ababa. Those are important acts that acknowledge the fact of integration.

There are regional organizations, and the African Union is one of them. But it is more than that: there is the African Union, then there are the other regional organizations, because Africa's agenda will increasingly be defined by the African Union.

Thank you very much, Sir, for having convened this highly significant debate, but as you yourself said, we hope to move beyond words, to move beyond promises because too many promises have already been made to Africa. I am convinced that this meeting will provide added value because there will be follow-up. You heard for yourself, Sir, in the comments made by each Head of State and Government around the table, a call for peace on the continent. How can it be otherwise, when we consider the individual dramas of men and women, the number of displaced persons, the number of refugees, the number of civilians who have been slaughtered, when we have seen on our continent the tragedy of the genocide perpetrated in Rwanda, from which, unfortunately, we have not yet learned all the lessons.

How could one not join in such a debate, when one is familiar with the tragedies that are unfolding in Africa, such as the terrible situation in Darfur and in Somalia? What I would like to say concerning Darfur is that, on 21 September, together with the United Nations, we organized a meeting here in New York. Significant commitments were made, significant commitments that must be met. The security of populations must be ensured and we must ensure the deployment of troops to Darfur as rapidly as possible. The commitments that were made must be respected.

There is also the issue of political dialogue, which must also reach completion. The Sudanese President has announced a ceasefire. It is crucial that this ceasefire be respected by all. A dialogue conference is scheduled for 27 September in Tripoli, and we must do everything in our power to ensure that all the Sudanese parties are seated at the table. We know that we can count on you, Sir, to ensure that that is indeed the case.

When it comes to Darfur, we have told the Sudanese to have faith, but not complacency. Faith, but no complacency: this is a primarily African responsibility. I have no doubt whatsoever that we will implement the resolution adopted by the United Nations.

Regarding Somalia, we need to be able to rapidly deploy African troops in order to give political dialogue a chance and to strengthen security. We have heard testimonials about all the efforts deployed by Africa to ensure peace and security. We have established a continent-wide structure to that end that is solid but that needs support. We need support in training our troops, support in improving our information and analysis services, but above all, support to ensure that we have permanent and regular financing.

Currently, operations are financed one by one. That makes it impossible to deploy rapidly and often means that interventions come too late. In addition, countries that are emerging from crises see their situation deteriorate, since they do not have solid support. This is something that we should pay close attention to. We should also not hesitate to review Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations in a creative light, as was suggested a few months ago by South Africa in this very Chamber.

The United Nations must take the regional component into account and integrate it in all of its actions. For this reason, the partnership between the African Union and the United Nations must be developed. The hybrid operation opens the way for that, and I believe that that indeed is the path to take in the future.

Around this table, everyone has recognized Africa's responsibility. It is essential. The primary responsibility, the responsibility to promote democracy, good governance, respect for human rights, is ours, because that is the primary foundation of security in any country. It is for that reason that we must condemn — and ensure zero tolerance for — those who use child soldiers. We must ensure zero tolerance for those who use child soldiers. There must be zero tolerance for those who perpetrate acts of violence against women. There must be zero tolerance when it comes to the use of mercenaries in Africa.

With regard to the problems afflicting peace in Africa, a number of lessons can be drawn. Even with regard to military operations, we must ensure that the political objectives are clear and that the democratic component holds pride of place in the resolution of conflicts. When commitments are made, they must be respected, but I am convinced that the examples set by the great democracies will also contribute to ensuring the implementation of decisions taken at this table. When States make commitments, they must honour them. There is no room for a policy of double standards. While dialogue is under way, rebel movements, too, must be bound to respect the rules of the game.

All of this has been said here before. You yourself, Sir, referred to it, and it is reflected in the paper that you distributed. Africa must be helped. The primary responsibility for ensuring peace in Africa belongs to Africans themselves. They must shoulder that responsibility. Our partners must let Africans run their own business. Financing is important, but it does not justify unbridled intervention or conduct. I feel that to be of extreme importance, because the vital interests of the African peoples are involved.

You yourself, Sir, used the term "rupture". With respect to relations with Africa today, that rupture is apparent at every level, beyond the legacy of colonization and the cold war. Africa is no longer a private hunting ground; it is no longer anyone's backyard; it is no longer a part of the Great Game; and it is no longer anyone's sphere of influence. Those are the few simple rules that will allow the continent to shoulder its responsibility and to demonstrate inter-African solidarity.

I should like to make the following three related points. The dynamic of integration must result in the reduction of foreign military bases currently operating in Africa. That should in turn help build African capacity to maintain a unified Africa. Africa's strength lies in its unity and in its capacity to shoulder its own responsibilities. To its own credit, Africa signed the Treaty of Pelindaba declaring the continent nuclear-weapon-free. That was an excellent undertaking, but how do we protect Africa without a system of collective security? What about Africa's need for civilian nuclear energy?

You touched upon the critical issue, Sir, of small arms and light weapons in Africa. Small arms and light weapons are weapons of mass destruction in Africa. We must move towards an international convention to mark those weapons and to ensure that they do not fall into illegitimate hands. In your paper, Sir, you point to the new threats that have emerged: the drug mafias, the tobacco mafias, the immigration mafias, the multifarious mafias that seek to dominate the commodities market in Africa today. I would add that a there is another threat might perhaps be seen rather as an opportunity: If Africa were to be completely bereft of new information and communications technologies, it would be able to turn that misfortune into a security benefit.

With that in mind when he spoke earlier, the President of the Congo noted the genuine threat posed by poverty. Many commitments have been made that have not been honoured. The Millennium Development Goals will not be met if things continue as they are because, if the rules do not change and if Africa does not gain the capacity to produce its own food and to process its own commodities and profit from their use, then it will be sidelined. You said so yourself, Sir.

In 40 years, there will be 1.7 billion people in Africa. That is equivalent to the population of the United States of America, Canada, Mexico, all of South America, Europe and Oceania combined. It is unthinkable that we could have a secure world while such grave poverty persists on a continent of such wealth.

I thank you, Sir, for inviting me to speak. I hope that in the not-too-distant future Africa will be represented here in the Security Council by a Permanent Representative to the United Nations. That, too, is a hope that has already been expressed by speakers here today.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank all the participants for coming together to make this meeting possible.

The Council has thus concluded its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.45 p.m.